



Saint Louis Audubon Society

VOLUME 56, NUMBER 3

OCTOBER, 1989

FIRST WILDLIFE FILM OF THE SEASON

by Staff

"WILDERNESS TREK THROUGH NEW ZEALAND" a color film by Grant Foster will be shown at the Webster Groves Christian Church on October 27th at 8:00pm. This will mark the beginning of the St. Louis Audubon Society film season.

New Zealand lies 1,200 miles southeast of Australia and consists of two main land masses, North Island and South Island. It is a small, isolated country with a pleasant climate that supports a unique blend of flora and fauna. Alpine flowers abound as luxuriantly as tropical greenery. Quiet rivers yield to turbulent waterfalls throughout the Southern Alps range and its highest peak, Mount Cook.

Although introduced species have altered the original natural balance, the only native mammal is the bat. Threatened by few natural predators, birdlife is abundant. But many, like the flightless Kiwi, the symbol of New Zealand, are struggling for survival. From the Heron-like Koto to the plaintive Tui, Grant Foster weaves legends and fact into a graceful film-lecture account of this pristine country and its wilderness creatures.

Grant Foster, of Wellington, is known as New Zealand's "Film Ambassador" for reason of his annual trips to North America to present his remarkable color films. He has worked as director-cameraman on many award-winning documentaries. One, "Amazing New Zealand", has won more worldwide awards than any other New Zealand film. It received the World Championship Cup in France. Mr. Foster inaugurated his country's first natural history film series, "Land of Birds", which has also received international acclaim.

EDUCATIONAL CENTER OPEN HOUSE

by Staff

The next Audubon Society open house will be held on October 8th. The event will include the "Wildlife at Your Window" slide show by Lee and Ed Mason about attracting wild birds to urban yards and gardens.

The Educational Center now features improved, more comfortable seating for your viewing and listening pleasure.

A JACK LONDON ADVENTURE

by John O'Leary

I always knew about Isle Royale. As a child in Detroit I would hear about the remote island park of Lake Superior in Northern Michigan. The island was rich in pure copper which brought Indians to the island as far back as 2000 B.C. They used the copper for weapons and for jewelry. The French came looking for copper on the island in the late 17th Century, and gave the island its name. For nearly a hundred years, the island was occupied by miners, but they were gone by the end of the 19th Century. Isle Royale became a National Park in 1931.

The most intriguing part of the island for me as a child was that it was the home of moose and wolves. To a ten year-old boy living in Detroit, this epitomized the wildness like the Jack London stories I used to read. So it seemed natural to me, the fulfillment of a childhood fantasy, to take a backpacking trip to Isle Royale.

I began my research. The 200 square-mile island is ideal for backpacking. There are more than 35 camping areas around the island. The 42 inland lakes are filled with trout, pike, and perch. The trails are well maintained, and the environment is unspoiled. For me, the best thing about the island was how few people there were -- an article I read said that more people visit Yellowstone in an hour than visit Isle Royale in a season.

Naturally, there are a few hardships too: many of the routes are difficult climbs, in the summer there are lots of...

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

WHAT'S INSIDE

- ◆ Be a Practicing Photographer, page 2.
- ◆ Stones & Bones, page 2
- ◆ Upcoming Films and Speakers, page 2
- ◆ From Your President, page 4
- ◆ Calendar of Events, page 5.
- ◆ Hotline Numbers, page 6.

STONES & BONES: MISSOURI'S COELACANTH

by M. C. Sumner

It would be hard to find a child's science textbook that didn't mention the Coelacanth. The story of this ugly, pugnacious fish and how it has survived, unchanged and unnoticed, from the time of the dinosaurs until the mid-twentieth century has a peculiar appeal. It suggests that the world may yet harbor other refugees from the past, "living fossils" from a less sophisticated age. And, in fact, the world is quite replete with such creatures.

Some of these living fossils make *Latimeria* (the surviving species of Coelacanth) look like a fresh-faced kid. Among these creatures are *Lingula*, the lamp shell, which has survived with little or no change for more than 400 million years. Other survivors from the distant past include such favorites as the cockroach.

Another of these creatures from the past is a fish that shares many features with the renowned coelacanth. It too has come down the the ages remarkably unchanged. It too is the last living species of a family that dates from over 100 million years ago. And, like the ancient Coelacanth, it has a primitive lung. This fish is *Amia calva*, the Bowfin.

Also known as a grunnel, grindle, or grindle-cat, one glance is enough to see distinctive nature of this refugee from the Mesozoic. Its broad bony head sports a frightening abundance of teeth and its body is wrapped in heavy overlapping scales. Anyone who has tried to fillet one will appreciate the toughness of the Bowfin's armor. Its most distinctive feature is its elongated dorsal fin that begins in mid-back and extends to the top of the tail. The tail fin is also notable, being rounded and sometimes bearing a large dark spot.

The Bowfin is marvelously adapted to life in conditions that other fish would find deadly. When the oxygen content of the water falls too low, the Bowfin extracts what it needs from the air. Should the water dry up the Bowfin can, at least for a period, aestivate in the mud like a lungfish. This ability has been lost in the modern Coelacanth, which has made other use of its "lung" and now lives at great depths.

When people talk about the evolution of organisms, they often do so with a kind of built-in snobbery that suggests that the latest is always the best; that older species are not just older but also more "primitive". Another common view is that flexibility is what pays off, that primitive, rigid organisms are unable to adapt to new situations. Actually, the fossil record shows that for great persistence it is specialization that works most often.

On a late-spring day, in the backwaters of a shallow lake or a sluggish stream, you can see the schools of young Bowfins trailing after guardian adults. The school moves slowly through the lillies and tree roots; the fingerlings black as night, the adult moving vigilantly about the swimming mass. Should T.Rex or Triceratops chanced to look into the shallows of a Cretaceous swamp, they might have viewed the same scene.

BE A PRACTICING PHOTOGRAPHER

by Lee Mason

The dictionary definition of practice is: "to do or perform habitually or customarily; make a habit of; to exercise or perform repeatedly in order to acquire or polish a skill." There, in one word, you have the key to photographic excellence.

If you cannot think of a project or subject matter, okay. Just walk out your front or back door for an arbitrary number of steps (you say how many). Then take a look at what is around you - sky, trees, bushes, grass, pavement. Now take a closer look at the cracks in the concrete, twistings of the blades of grass, the netting of twigs in the bushes, the layering of leaves on the trees, cloud patterns - by looking through the viewfinder of your camera. If there's a downpour and the weather is against you, you might empty the refrigerator of fruits and vegetables, heap them on the kitchen table, and look them over carefully through the camera viewfinder.

You'll be in for surprises as you examine things visually in this way. Forms emerge - curves, curls, circles, loops, coils, meanderings, crinklings, whorls, spirals, kinks, and twists - to become provocative pin-pointed subjects or interesting abstracts. You'll become conscious of a kaleidoscope of colors, some strong, some weak. The play of light will emphasize or subdue something. Light can always amaze!

"Practicing" will keep you familiar with your equipment and how to use it well - so when you are on vacation or at some special location, you will capture images that are appealing, informative, and meaningful!

UPCOMING SPEAKERS AND SUBJECTS

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| October 27 | "Wilderness Trek Through New Zealand"
by Grant Foster (see article on page 1)
A film exploration of the two islands of New Zealand and their unique flora and fauna. |
| November 17 | "Alaska... The Last Wilderness"
by Dale Johnson
A year-round adventure in the vast reaches of our 49th state. |
| January 19 | GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Presentation on biotechnology by personnel from Monsanto. |
| February 23 | "Underwater Adventures"
by Dick Massey
Explore the ocean from New Zealand, to the Red Sea. |
| March 23 | "Hidden Worlds of the Big Cypress Swamp" by Richard Kern
The wildlife of Florida's hidden treasure. |

...mosquitoes and black flies, and the water may have both girardia and tapeworm eggs. Packers must boil or filter all their water and pack in all their food. The weather can be cold with snowstorms in May, but the beauty and remoteness are special and, as such, one of the chief attractions.

Getting to the Island is not easy. A friend and I flew from St. Louis to Duluth, drove the 150 miles to Grand Portage, Minnesota near the Canadian border. From there, we ferried over to the island the following morning. It was late May, so the weather was still cold -- down to freezing at night. This was an advantage in two ways because it meant few bugs and even fewer people.

It took us three hours to arrive at the near end of the Island and another hour to our landing point at Rock harbour on the east side of the island. A quick check-in at the ranger station for a permit, and we were off. We were going out for eight days and 60 miles of hiking.

That night we camped at Moskey Basin, a bay on Lake Superior. We were pleased to discover that this campsite was one that offered wooden shelters. They are three-sided huts and are a real leap in comfort from the cold ground or a night in a tent. There were no boats and no one else was around. As evening came, the bay waters got glassy calm. The sunset lit up the sky with a bright northern orange glow as in an Ansel Adams scene. It would have been quiet as a picture as well were it not for the occasional cry of a loon.

We rose at five-thirty to what seemed a riot of noises compared with the evening before. The bird activity included, among others, White Throated Sparrows and Blackburnian Warblers. The seagulls hacked offshore, and occasionally you could hear the loud honk of a Great Blue Heron.

I had spent the night before in a sleeping bag fully dressed in long johns. The temperature was in the low 30's so I wore gloves and a watch cap pulled down around my ears. I fumbled about heating up the small white-gas stove for a coffee and oatmeal breakfast. A graffiti note on the shelter wall told of colder days yet as someone had written "Bruce 5-21-82 It's 16 degrees and there is 18 inches of snow on the ground. No ----!"

Our hike that day ran through swamps and forests with an occasional view of a distant small lake. In bog areas, the park service had constructed long boardwalks of 2-by-10's that were ten feet to half a mile long. Even though they were precarious at times due to age and weathering and often required balancing efforts to cross, they were always a great relief compared to marching through the swamps below them. The terrain changed rapidly as we moved up and down different heights or nearer or closer to the water. Types of trees often grew in clumps, so an area would be all Jack-Pines or all Birches.

Everywhere we went we saw moose tracks and occasionally the impression of a wolf's foot in a wet bog. We saw our first moose at McCargo Cove on the north side of island. 150 yards across the bay, a seven-foot, 1000 pound moose was feeding in four feet of water. It watched us, but was seemingly unconcerned with our gawking.

McCargo marked the beginning of the Minong Ridge, which was the most challenging 30 miles of the route. The ridge was the best part of the hike for me. The high points were only 500 to 600 feet above the Lake Superior water level, but they seemed a lot greater. Because they were steep climbs over basalt rocks, there was little vegetation at the top, which made for beautiful vistas. The route went up and down the hills for four days. The rocky and rooty trails wore out both the legs and the feet.

The second day on the ridge we made camp at 'Little Todd'. The entrance to the campsite included a swamp to trudge through, a few hills, and lastly a beautiful half-mile square White Birch forest. The forest consisted of only White Birch, all of the same relative age and height. The stand of trees was so thick you could not see beyond it in any direction, forming the appearance of solid white walls.

The camp was beyond the forest on the Lake Superior shore. We prepared a fire and wondered if we would be able to stay awake to our normal time -- eight o'clock. A few we had visitors, a moose and her foal grazed to within thirty yards of our camp. That night was the first night I heard wolves crying. The wolves are very secretive and are rarely seen by visitors. Their dog-like crying in the distance brought back the Jack London images of survival in the north country.

It started raining at nine in the evening. At six the next morning it was still raining and the thirty-degree temperature made us hasten to the trail so we could warm up by walking. We headed to Lake Desore, the second largest interior lake, in what was to be the hardest section of the Minong Trek.

We strained up and down the ridge hills and rocky surfaces. My legs got weak going up the hills and we took standing rests every ten to fifteen minutes. We came across numerous small lakes and beaver ponds. The trail included using beaver dams as crossing for streams or swamps. Crossing these was a balancing act, with the weight of the pack complicating the endeavor. We crossed at the point where the water flowed over the dams. Muddy sticks and soft dirt surfaces gave way under our feet and could have easily sent us tumbling into the beaver pond or downstream into the creek.

We camped at Lake Desore. A big rock in the water served as a site for some cast fishing for Northern Pike. That night it rained and around two in the morning, half asleep with my ear to the ground, I could hear the heavy hooves of a moose striking the ground just outside the tent.

The next morning we were off to the end of the trail at Windigo. The last leg was eleven miles with a slight slope downhill. The ridges were disappearing and the wooded areas increased as we moved down in elevation towards Windigo and the water.

The site of Windigo was exciting. Our legs and backs were sore by then, but rest wasn't the main attraction. Windigo had fresh water, bathrooms, and food. The final march seemed easy as it was through lowlands and grassy fields. We picked a shelter on the edge of the Washington River. We were to meet the ferry that would take us back in two days, so we had a day to relax. I spread my socks out to dry and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

by David Tylka

The survey results are in. As the newsletter submission deadline approached on September 8th, a total of 151 individuals or families had filled out and mailed in their survey forms. The Annual Membership Listing that came out at the end of July listed 2,498 paid memberships in our chapter. The 151 returns therefore represent an over 6% response. While this response rate is not overwhelming to some, it gave us a good sampling of the thoughts of our members and it is a substantially better return compared to the 30 some questionnaires that were returned the last time our members were polled in 1981.

Why did our members join the Audubon Society? The three main reasons that almost everyone listed were (in descending order): they are environmentally concerned, they wanted to obtain Audubon magazine, and because they enjoy nature. And, over two-thirds of the members listed their support for conservation education. Only 16% specifically listed meeting with others of similar and 13% specifically listed their desire for field trips as a reason for joining.

The most popular subject chosen for programs at meetings was talks on birds/birding. (62%). Natural history programs, travelogues, and talks on where to go to enjoy nature were topics chosen by about 40% of our members. Reinforcing our environmental concern, 54% desired programs on local conservation issues, 40% on regional issues, and 30% on national issues. "How-to" programs and workshops were only desired by a quarter of our members.

Concerning the scheduling of meetings, Monday, Tuesday, and Friday nights were the most popular days of the week. Most people wanted more general membership meetings. Only 4% wanted to continue to hold only one yearly membership meeting, the annual banquet meeting. (In the last ten years, I believe only one general membership meeting was held besides the annual banquet meetings.) Thirty-Four percent preferred quarterly meetings, 10% voted for bimonthly meetings, 25% wanted monthly meetings, and 22% expressed no opinion.

Although 44% of those people who sent back surveys offered no opinion about holding Audubon Screen Tours, 34% thought we should continue to contract 4 per year at \$550.00 per showing. Several other members thought they were too extravagant. Eighteen percent felt that they should be discontinued or decreased to two a year., while 6% felt we should increase to 6 a year.

Some other important decisions in the near future will be facing us in regard to our St. Louis Audubon Education Center in Crescent, Missouri. When asked why more members were not using it, 19% reported that they did not have the time or had too many conflicting activities and 16% felt that it was not conveniently located. Although many people left this question blank, 28% did not know we had the Center, with several asking "Where in the world is Crescent, Missouri?"

The last question that was initially tabulated asked about your preference on your degree of chapter activity. About a quarter of the respondents left this question blank, another quarter checked "Leave me alone and let me read Audubon magazine in peace," still another quarter checked that they were already doing as much as they could, and the last quarter said that they would like someone to contact them with well defined tasks. For those 39 people who would like to be contacted and who checked various items in questions 8 and 9 (which dealt with abilities and desires), we are planning to computerize this information and will be in touch, so please be patient with us. If a committee chairperson does not contact you by November and you have a genuine desire to lend a helping hand, please call me (296-1419). For those of you who checked "leave me alone" but checked that you have abilities/access to certain resources, try not to get upset with us if we give you a call on specific needs of our organization.

What did we all gain from this survey? We now have a better feeling about what is important to you and what some of your preferences are. In this next year, we are going to have quarterly meetings. They will be scheduled on Fridays, but we may try some Monday and Tuesday nights as well. If you want meetings more often and these quarterly meetings are well attended, we will probably try scheduling bimonthly or monthly meetings the following year. We now have some ideas of what programs will be most appealing at these general membership meetings. And again, we have some important decisions to make about our Center in the near future. Overall though, we are making progress. D.T.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Betty Williams has made a contribution in honor of her father, Harry Theis, to support the weather station at the Audubon Education Center.

Eugenia Larson has donated a stove.

A JACK LONDON ADVENTURE (FROM 3)

slept till eight the next day!

The trip was very rewarding for me. I felt the solitude and the sense of adventure reminiscent of Jack London's northern country. It was also invigorating for the taxing physical experience. Backpacking, like no other sport I have experienced, gives one an exhilarating feeling of self-sufficiency.

You can go to Isle Royale and stay in the lodge at Rock Harbor, tour the island by ferry, or do short day trips on foot or in canoes from the main stops. Start your planning by contacting the park rangers in Houghton, Michigan at 906/482-0984.

OCTOBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Audubon Photographic Section Meeting	3 Board Meeting Glendale City Hall 424 N. Sappington	4	5	6	7
8 Educational Center "Wildlife at Your Window"	9	10 Education Committee Meeting	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Conservation Committee Meeting	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Wildlife File Series "Wilderness Trek Through New Zealand"	28
29 Raptor Open House Audubon Booth	30	31	NOV. 1	NOV. 2	NOV. 3	NOV. 4

NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6 Photo Section Meeting "Alaska" by Ralph Cook	7 Board Meeting Glendale City Hall 424 N. Sappington	8	9	10	11
12 Educational Center "Lyme's Disease, etc."	13	14 Educational Committee Meeting	15	16	17 <i>Alaska film</i>	18
19	20	21 Conservation Committee Meeting	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	DEC. 1

AUDUBON EDUCATIONAL CENTER "2ND SUNDAY" PROGRAMS

by Karen S. Haller

The Audubon Society will continue its series of "Second Sunday" programs in November and December with two presentations at the Educational Center in Crescent, Missouri.

On Sunday, November 12 Cathy Reppel will present the program "Lyme's Disease, etc." Cathy is working on her doctorate degree in biology at St. Louis University and will bring us up-to-date on her survey of ticks in Missouri and the disease pathogens - spirochetes and rickettsias - that they carry.

On Sunday, December 10, Katherine and Oliver Siegmund will share their experiences as Peace Corps volunteers through their slide presentation "Peace Corps Experiences in the Fiji Islands". This presentation will cover Fijian history, lifestyle, crafts, and natural history including pictures of the Thurston Botanical Gardens.

Both programs will begin at 1:30pm. Be sure to come!

HOTLINE NUMBERS

The following numbers may be of interest to St. Louis Audubon Society members:

National Audubon Hotline: (202) 547-9019. A recorded message gives background information and current status of Audubon's priority issues. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the message is updated weekly. This hotline lets you know when sounding off about something will do the most good.

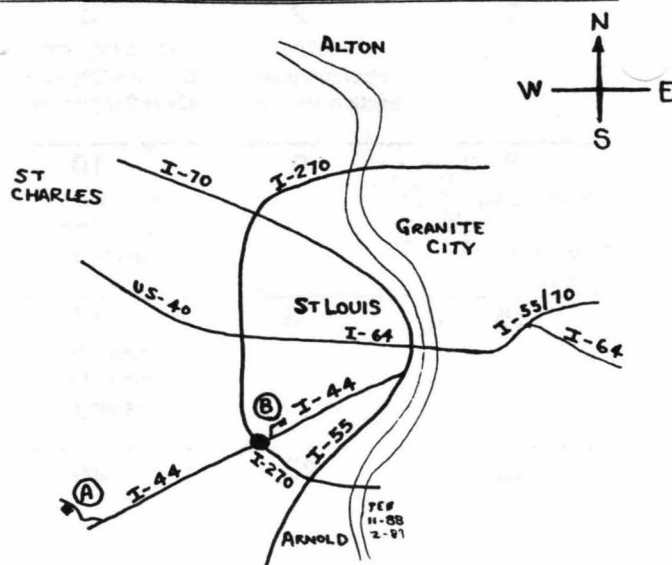
National Wildlife Federation Legislative Hotline: (202) 797-6655. A 4-minute message updated every Tuesday. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call when the rates are cheapest. Follow wildlife and conservation issues or just keep informed.

Congressional Reference Service: (202) 225-1772. For the current status on any Federal bill, call between 9:00AM and 6:00PM, Eastern Time. Be sure to have the bill's number or official title ready. The reference service is free, but the call is not.

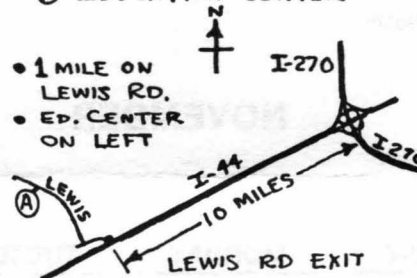
MARAIS TEMPS CLAIR UPDATE

The management plan for the Marais Temps Clair Wildlife Area is currently being revised. If you have any ideas about future management for this area, please contact your Vice President for Conservation, Bill Salsgiver.

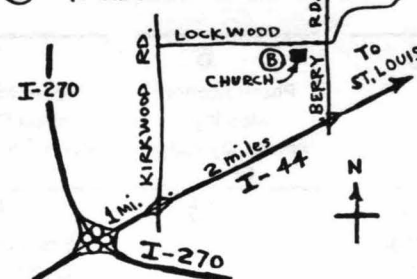
GETTING TO ST. LOUIS AUDUBON EVENTS



① EDUCATION CENTER



② WILDLIFE FILMS



NEWSLETTER STAFF

- Editor-In-Chief: Blaine Ulmer
- Editor: Cis Hager
- Layout: M. C. Sumner